



## 7:31am by Val-Creative

**Category:** Stranger Things, 2016

**Genre:** Friendship, Romance

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Eleven/Jane H., Max M.

**Pairings:** Max M./Eleven/Jane H.

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**Summary:** Max admires El fast asleep during one of their sleepovers. Boys don't deserve her. But maybe Max doesn't either.

7:31am

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Max's rainbow-striped sheets gather around her legs. She kicks them down, waking up.

Billy's dad found them in the laundry basket a year ago and said he was gonna throw them out. To Max's relief, her mom stopped leaving out the basket.

She loves her sheets. They're colorful and soft and feel warm. And, well, Max knows *why* Billy's dad hates them. Owning rainbows makes you a queer. It's too flamboyant. It somehow threatens his masculinity to have to even *look* at Max's sheets. Billy's dad says that queers took the rainbow from God-fearing Christians like Billy's dad and their family for their symbol of sinning.

*That's a bunch of horseshit!*

And even if Max could admit she likes girls, to Lucas or her friends, she doesn't blame a *rainbow*. Liking other girls is... just something natural. Right now happening. It feels like Max was always like this and *nobody* is allowed to intimidate her.

Rustling. Max peers over her shoulder over her bed-mate. She nearly forgot.

El, with strands of honey-brown hair plastered to her lips, fidgets in Max's bed and doesn't open her eyes. Still asleep probably. She's mostly covered up in the rainbow-striped sheets and Max's duvet. Her expression serene.

Max lies back down, draping an arm under her head on the pillow, using her other hand to reach out. Max's forefinger lightly strokes over El's cheek, reveling in a sort of identical shapely-softness and warmth. *I like girls*. Max bites harshly on her lower lip, swallowing down the lump in her throat. *I like girls. And I'm not ashamed. I'm not.*

*I'm not, I'm not, I'm not—*

"Mm?" El hums out, like a sleepy, idyllic question. She touches over Max's hand to her cheek.

"You had some lint on your face," Max lies, offering a cheerful grin when El's brown eyes flutter open. She pretends to pick it away from El's jaw, grasping at nothing but air, flicking two of her fingers together in midair.

Her rainbow sheets bundle in El's hand. She yanks them over her and Max's head, laughing in the cozy, colorful darkness.

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*Stranger Things isn't mine. Requested by irefusetoanswer (AO3): "soft elmax." I'm always in love with them! Thank you! And any comments welcomed!*